



GREAT LAKES EDUCATION FOUNDATION

HB 4822 (Price) – K-3 Reading & Early Literacy GLEP Testimony – Senate Education Committee – March 8, 2016

- Good Afternoon, Chairman Pavlov and members of the Senate Education Committee.
- Improving early literacy is one of the most important issues in K-12 education, and more than 35 states have developed comprehensive K-3 reading programs. Newly-appointed State Superintendent Brian Whiston said in his first podcast how important 3rd grade reading is for the state.
- Despite our \$4 billion annual investment in K-3 education, roughly one-half of Michigan's 3rd grade students are not proficient readers. Worse, reading proficiency has been steadily declining for the past 12 years while reading proficiency in nearly every other state has been on the rise.
- A workgroup of key legislative and administration stakeholders, chaired by John Kennedy, met for months last year to review options, examine strategies and make specific recommendations to improve early literacy. HB 4822 is a result of this bi-cameral, bi-partisan and dual-branch workgroup.
- This bill will improve early literacy by focusing on early annual screening; parental notification and participation; targeted strategies and tutoring for struggling readers; along with intensive intervention for students reading behind grade level.
- The bill provides students the ability to participate in summer reading camps, and it includes a number of "good cause" exemptions which include passing an alternative assessment; demonstrating proficiency through a student portfolio of work; students with an IEP or disability; and English Language Learners.
- The S-3 version before you clarifies that 3rd graders who are partially proficient and not-proficient in ELA will receive a Reading Improvement Plan and may be candidates for retention.
- In the end, we're more focused on helping kids read than retention, yet we fear implementing the interventions necessary to improve proficiency will not be conducted with fidelity if it is common knowledge in a building or district that "we simply don't retain kids here." For that reason, we are requesting you remove the Principal/Teacher and Parent/Superintendent "good cause" exemptions or have them sunset if improvements in the state's overall reading proficiency don't keep pace with our official Annual Measurable Objectives.
- In order to monitor and evaluate our progress here, we would also request districts annually report the number of non-proficient readers, those retained and those promoted to the state.
- We support passage of HB 4822, amended thusly, because it will improve academic outcomes for students. We urge this committee and the full Senate to pass this bill at your earliest opportunity.
- I'd be happy to answer any questions at this time.

Supporting quality choices in public education.